NEWS FROM
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A CONVERSATION WITH THE EDITORS OF "THE ESSENTIAL WHOLE EARTH CATALOG"

Q. What do you do with a Whole Earth Catalog?

A. Shop. Dream. Get inspired. This catalog describes tools and books and helps you decide which ones you need to do almost anything. It points to the best when there are a bunch of similar items. You use it to meet new ideas and a lot of stuff you probably don't know anything about. This is a user's manual that helps individuals take control of their own lives, even in areas they never thought possible.

Q. Why do another Whole Earth Catalog? Didn't that die with the sixties?

A. Things evolve. We've changed. You've changed. Becoming comfortable with change, which is one of the things the Catalog is about, is as important as ever. There are more tools and more how-to books out there, and more reason than ever to learn multiple new skills as one grows. The Whole Earth Catalog in the sixties helped people learn new skills outside of schoolrooms. The necessity for knowing how to do that hasn't died at all. **THE ESSENTIAL WHOLE EARTH CATALOG** concentrates on specific contemporary skills, and most importantly, teaches the meta-skill of acquiring skills.

Q. How is it different from other Whole Earth Catalogs? How much of it is new? Does it cover the same old things?

A. This version ofthe Catalog has a similar structure and similar perspective to earlier ones, but with 18 years of experience and reader feedback, it has new insights. Many of the subjects this Catalog evaluates, like laser discs, satellite TV, urban legends, natural bioregions, computers, and genetics, were hardly considered five years ago.

Each evolution of the Whole Earth Catalog, starting from the first one in 1968, has kept in tune with the concerns of its day. **THE ESSENTIAL CATALOG** has less emphasis on homesteading and more on the household. It is less experimental and more experienced. About 60% of it is new since the last Catalog in 1981.

Q. How do you decide what goes in?

A. We choose certain items because 1) they are the best of their kind, 2) they are the only one of their kind, 3) they signify a trend, or 4) they

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are unusual, extreme in pushing the frontier, wonderful, riveting, inspirational, highly consequential, or proven over time. We learn by readers pointing out things we have overlooked.

Q. The size of this Catalog is different. Why is it smaller?

A. The page size of this Catalog is smaller, but in total number of items it's generally bigger than most of our previous Catalogs except the Next Whole Earth Catalog. We've learned how to pack the same information into a smaller bundle. This edition is handier to carry, store, and read.

Q. Don't a lot of other books do the same thing?

A. Nope. We've never found a bookstore (let alone a book!), or a library or a shopping mall that has even come close to carrying the selection of items and ideas we have accumulated here.

Q. Will there be another one?

A. You bet.

--Kevin Kelly and J. Baldwin
Editors of **THE ESSENTIAL WHOLE EARTH CATALOG**
The Point Foundation
October 24, 1968; $15.00

1968 THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOG
1971 THE LAST WHOLE EARTH CATALOG
1974 THE WHOLE EARTH EPILOG
1980 THE NEXT WHOLE EARTH CATALOG
1986 THE ESSENTIAL WHOLE EARTH CATALOG

(There have also been updates on each of the earlier Catalogs)